



## ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

MEMORANDUM

7/19/82

DATE: November 19, 1982

TO: Land Division File

FROM: Gerald E. Steele, DLPC/FOS-Central Region *gso*

SUBJECT: LPC #18302013 - VERMILION CO. - DANVILLE/DANVILLE PLATING



An investigation of the old Danville Plating Company facility in Danville, Illinois, was conducted on November 19, 1982, by this author in the company of Jim Kelty of the Emergency Response Unit. The investigation was requested by Vermilion County ESDA Coordinator John Schaffer. The situation involved plating chemicals in open vats and drums inside and around the deteriorating building of the closed facility. The property had recently been purchased by Danville School District #118. A meeting was held at the ESDA office upon our arrival. Those present included Ray Scarce, Gerald Colwell, and Arlyn Ranginberger from District 118, Assistant Chief Jack Hardesty of the Danville Fire Department, Sgt. Jerry Cranmore of the Danville Police Department and Paul Shabbe of the Danville Health Department. Mr. Bill Simes, an on-scene coordinator for the U.S.E.P.A. was also present.

According to Mr. Schaffer, the plating operation closed several years ago. The facility was owned by Mr. Robert Vanetta. District #118 bought the property in July, 1982. In August, a citizen complaint was received by Mr. Schaffer and investigated by Mr. Shabbe and Schaffer. The site was heavily overgrown with vegetation and was becoming a random dump. Additionally, the plating chemicals had been left on-site. Numerous open vats and approximately 26 barrels were observed on the property (twenty outside, six inside). Mr. Vanetta was contacted. He stated he was still working on taking things out. He planned on selling the materials to a firm in Chicago. Some time later, the police chief investigated a complaint about materials being removed. It was found that Vanetta was removing some of his property from the building. Some of the barrels had been removed. The vats of plating chemicals and the drum of zinc cyanide were left behind. The building was described as in very poor repair with all of the windows broken and a large hole in the roof.

Mr. Scarce stated that during a July 16, 1982, meeting to finalize the purchase of the building, a verbal agreement was reached with Mr. Vanetta. He was to remove all of his personal

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Danville/Danville Plating

property within a reasonable amount of time. When the school district was contacted concerning the chemicals a month later, they in turn contacted Mr. Vanetta. He stated that the only materials left were muratic acid and this was watered down enough to make it safe to drink. During the first week of October, school officials noted that students from the high school, which is located across the street, were using the property to hold beer parties. A work crew was sent to clear off the brush and clean up the property. They also replaced the cover on a shallow well. In cleaning up the property, they uncovered the drums stored outside. The school district called Mr. Vanetta to determine what was in them and when he was going to remove them. He stated he didn't know, and wasn't going to do anymore clean-up. Mr. Scarce said the School Board considered the vats and chemicals as Mr. Vanetta's personal property.

We next went to the site located at 307 East Fairchild (the NE corner of Fairchild and Washington). The building was a concrete block and wood structure. Several cracks ran the complete height of the walls. Upon entry, it was observed that these cracks ran completely through the walls. The west wall had shifted so that it was no longer a straight line. The building consisted of 7 rooms and a bath room. Only two of the rooms contained vats. A large hole was observed in the north central portion of the roof. Objects and pipes hanging from the ceiling made wearing a hard hat a necessity. Lighting was very poor. Tests performed prior to prolonged entry included oxygen level, combustible gases, organic vapors, and hydrogen cyanide (HCN) gas level.

The far west room ran the length of the building. This room contained both empty and filled vats, empty containers, and the nearly full fiber drum of Zinc Cyanide. Dust rings on pallets in the north part of the room indicated more drums had been stored there at one time. Vats at the south end of the room appeared to have been rusted or corroded through, and had leaked their contents on the floor. The concrete floor in this part of the building had been severely deteriorated. A field pH test on those vats containing liquid showed a pH of 10 or 11. Drager tube reading for HCN gas indicated concentrations of 5 ppm just above the liquid. Just east of this room was another room, which ran the entire length of the building. The bath room was located here. A large floor drain was located at either end of the room. A garage door was located at the north end, with a pedestrian entrance at the south end. Material in this room consisted of trash and wood.

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The northern portion of the remaining floor space was divided into three rooms. The western room appeared to have been an office. Just east of the office was what appeared to have been a lab. Access to the lab was made only through the office. Shelves in the lab contained several bottles labeled as metal containing solutions. These bottles were from the same manufacturer, and were numbered, as if they had come in a package of chemicals. Two small fiber drums were sitting on the floor. The shelves also contained several non-chemical bottles, which might contain chemicals (ie. a whiskey bottle containing a solid material). Except for trash, the east room was empty. The room contained a vent to the outside. The southern end of the remaining floor space was apparently a storage room, and contained trash.

The remaining room contained a majority of the vats and chemicals. Vat sizes ranged from approximately 4 feet square to over 20 feet long. Several open top 5 gallon plastic buckets, which contained some liquid were observed scattered around the room. Four drums were also observed at various parts of this room. Field pH tests indicated pH's ranging from 0 to 13. Some cases of strong acids setting next to strong bases were observed. A wooden elevated walkway, which ran along and in between the vats was in poor repair.

Approximately 20 drums were placed along the outer south-east wall. These were overgrown by brush and vines. They appeared to be in poor condition. On two of the drums, the tops had rusted through. Both contained a dark colored material. Field pH tests indicated that one had a pH of 7, and the other had a pH of 10.

After decontamination, we returned to the ESDA office. At the request of the police and fire departments, possible response activities were determined, in case of a fire or release would occur. Conversations were held with the school district and Mr. Vanetta's attorney about possible liability. Mr. Simes contacted U.S.E.P.A. and received tentative approval to utilize Federal funds should they be necessary. Different contractors were contacted and requested to make a site survey and cost estimate. This was being done to better evaluate who might be financing the clean-up. Further clean-up at the site would depend on that determination.

GES/cp

Attachments

cc: DLPC/FOS, Central Region  
Emergency Response Unit  
✓ B. Simes/USEPA-Region V



Date: November 19, 1982

Time: 11:30-3:00 A.M. ☒ P.M.

Photograph By:

G. Steele DLPC/FOS Central

Location: LPC-18302013

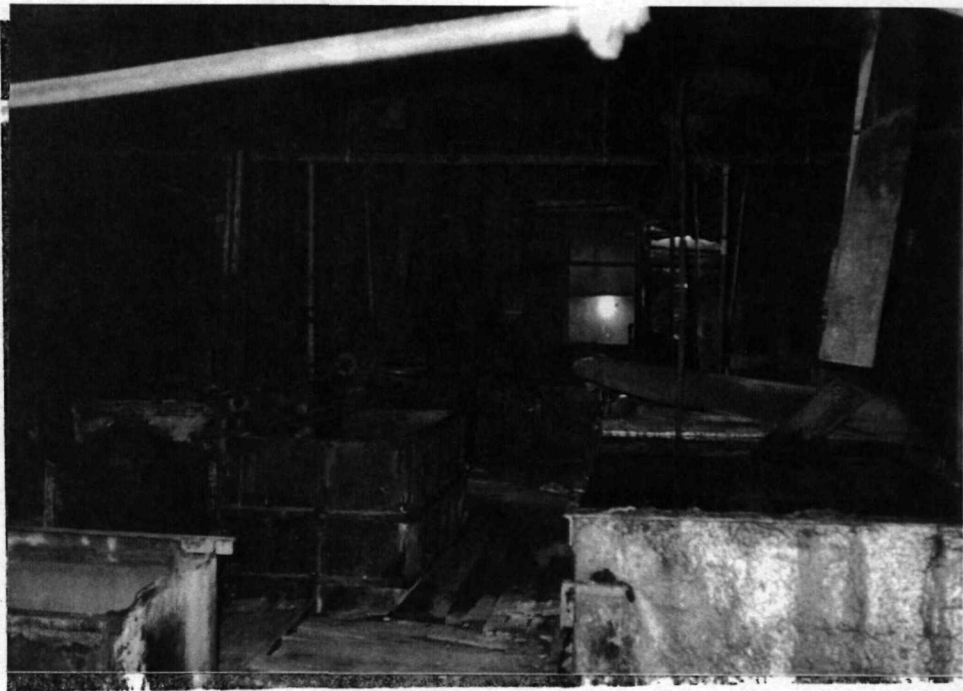
Vermilion Co.

Donville / Donville Pltg.

Comments: Photograph taken

toward the south from the  
north east part of  
Room 3

Roll #40



Date: November 19, 1982

Time: 11:30-3:00 A.M. ☒ P.M.

Photograph By:

G. Steele DLPC/FOS Cent.

Location: LPC-18302013

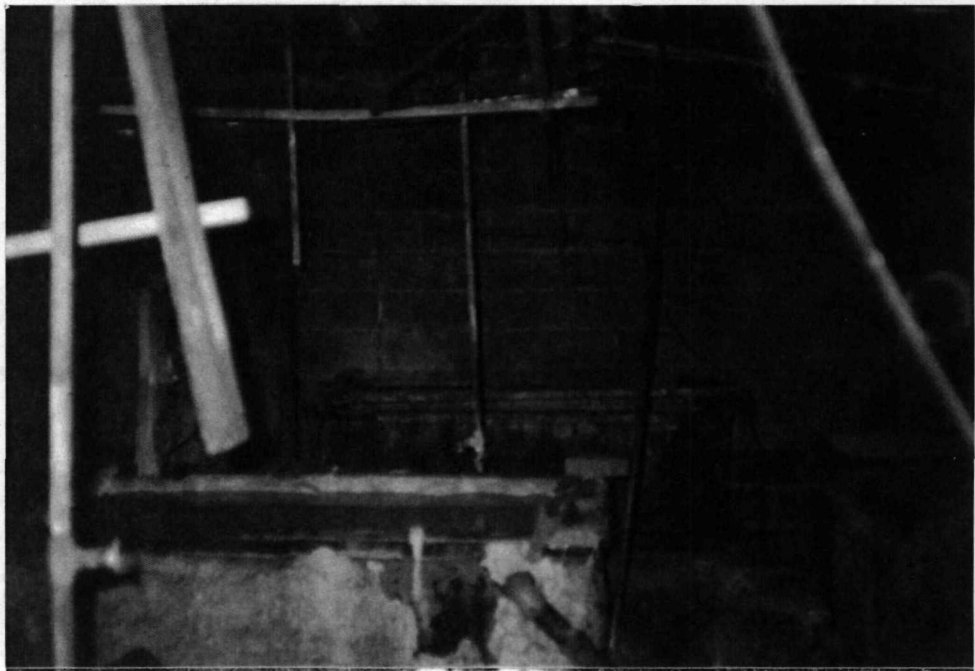
Vermilion Co.

Donville / Donville Pltg.

Comments: Photograph taken

toward the East from the  
east central part of  
Room 3

Roll #40



Date: November 19, 1982

Time: 11:30-3:00 A.M. ☒ P.M.

Photograph By:

G. Steele DLPC/FOS Central

Location: LPC-18302013

Vermilion Co.

Donville / Donville Plty.

Comments: Photograph taken

toward the south from the

north central part of

Room 3

Roll #40



Date: November 19, 1982

Time: 11:30-3:00 A.M. ☒ P.M.

Photograph By:

E. Steele DLPC/FOS Cent.

Location: LPC-18302013

Vermilion Co.

Donville / Donville Plty.

Comments: Photograph taken

toward the ~~north~~ south west

from the west central part

of Room 3

Roll #40





Date: November 19, 1982

Time: 11:30-8:00 A.M. ☒ P.M.

Photograph By:

G. Steele DLPC/FOS Central

Location: LPC-18302013

Vermilion Co.

Denville / Denville Plty.

Comments: Photograph taken

toward the northwest from the  
central part of Room 5

Roll #40



Date: November 19, 1982

Time: 11:30-3:00 A.M. ☒ P.M.

Photograph By:

E. Steele DLPC/FOS Cent.

Location: LPC-18302013

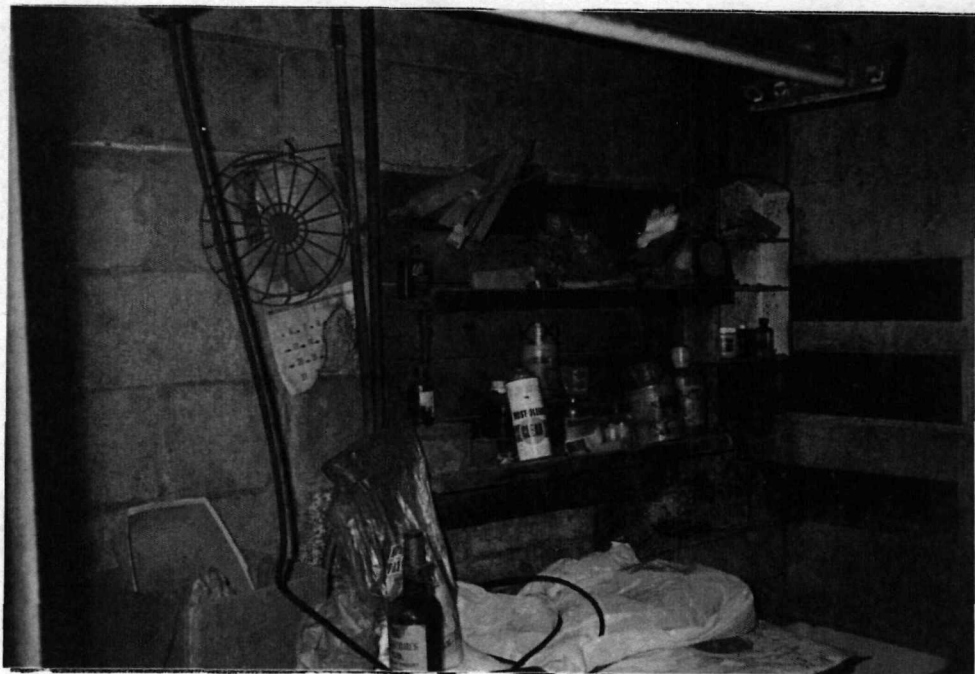
Vermilion Co.

Denville / Denville Plty.

Comments: Photograph taken

toward the northeast from  
the central part of Room 5

Roll #40



Date: November 19, 1982

Time: 11:30-3:00 A.M. ☒ P.M.

Photograph By:

G. Steele DLPC/FOS Central

Location: LPC-18302013

Vermilion Co.

Denville / Denville Pkg.

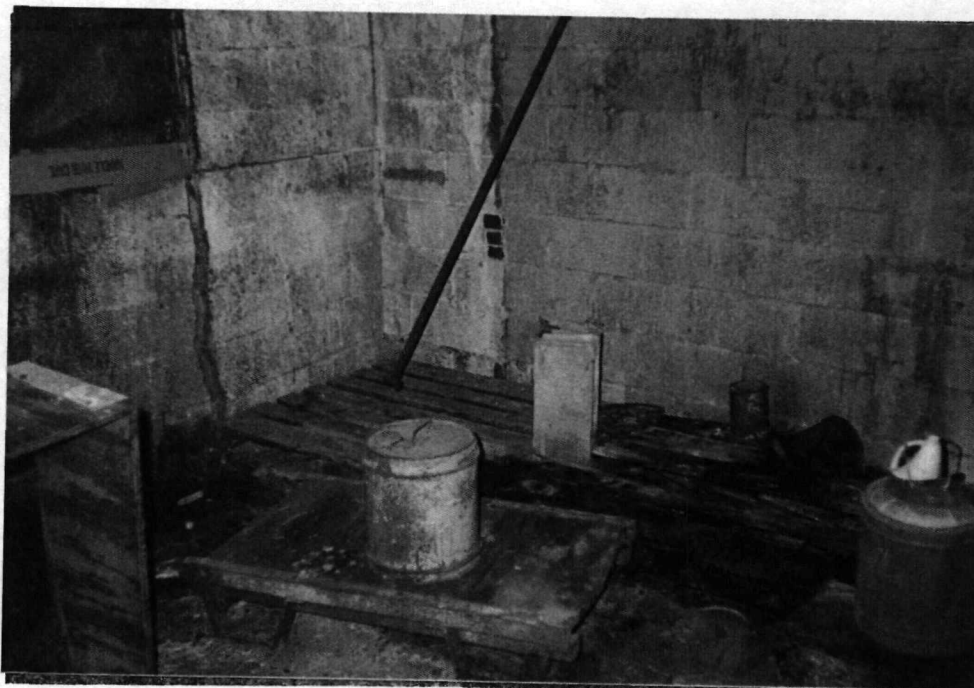
Comments: Photograph taken

toward the northwest from the

north central part of

Room 1

Roll #40



Date: November 19, 1982

Time: 11:30-3:00 A.M. ☒ P.M.

Photograph By:

G. Steele DLPC/FOS Cent.

Location: LPC-18302013

Vermilion Co.

Denville / Denville Pkg.

Comments: Photograph taken

toward the north from the

northeast part of room 1

Roll #40





Date: November 19, 1982

Time: 11:30-3:00 A.M. ☒ P.M.

Photograph By:

G. Steele DLPC/FOS Central

Location: LPC-18302013

Vermilion Co.

Donville / Donville Pkg.

Comments: Photograph taken

toward the west from central  
part of room 1



Roll #40

Date: November 19, 1982

Time: 11:30-3:00 A.M. ☒ P.M.

Photograph By:

G.E. Steele DLPC/FOS Cent.

Location: LPC-18302013

Vermilion Co.

Donville / Donville Pkg.

Comments: Photograph taken

toward the southwest from  
NE part of room 1



Roll #40

Date: November 19, 1982

Time: 11:30-3:00 A.M. ☒ P.M.

Photograph By:

G. Steele DLPC/FOS Central

Location: LPC-18302013

Vermilion Co.

Donville / Donville Pkg.

Comments: Photograph taken

toward the north from the  
northeast

~~submerged~~ part of the

property

Roll #40



Date: November 19, 1982

Time: 11:30-3:00 A.M. ☒ P.M.

Photograph By:

G.E. Steele DLPC/FOS Cent.

Location: LPC-18302013

Vermilion Co.

Donville / Donville Pkg.

Comments: Photograph taken

toward the northeast from

the south central part of

the property

Roll #40



Date: November 19, 1982

Time: 11:30-8:00 A.M. ☒ P.M.

Photograph By:

G. Steele DLPC/FOS Central

Location: LPC-18302013

Vermilion Co.

Donville / Donville Pkg.

Comments: Photograph taken

toward the ~~south~~ northeast

from the northeast part  
of Room 3

Roll #40



Date: November 19, 1982

Time: 11:30-3:00 A.M. ☒ P.M.

Photograph By:

G.E. Steele DLPC/FOS Cent.

Location: LPC-18302013

Vermilion Co.

Donville / Donville Pkg.

Comments: Photograph taken

toward the north from the

south central part of  
Room 2

Roll #40

